

Annex 1

OFFICE OF TI DD/I

30 June 1977

TO : Sayre

VIA : Van

FROM : Ron

SUBJECT: Study on Language Proficiency and Area
Visits of DDI Analysts

1. Attached is the final version of the draft study you had requested and received following your visit last Friday afternoon. You may recall the draft did not include all the tabs, the concluding section was only a first cut and additional data had to be obtained from ORPA on the African analysts.

2. Regarding the latter, no African analyst speaks any of the tribal languages. It is claimed that this lack of proficiency is not a problem because the English, French, or Portuguese newspapers of the area carry all the relevant news.

3. On another matter, I'm not sure if all offices have a single definition to distinguish functional from area analysts. Historically, it has been difficult to sort them out. Even if there is mixed reporting as to what is functional versus area, however, I'm certain we are dealing with a small number of analysts in this regard, and the situation does not distort the thrust of this study.

Ron

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LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AND AREA VISITS
OF INTELLIGENCE DIRECTORATE ANALYSTS

1. Purpose and Definitions

a. This report is the result of a survey (Tab 1) to determine the language proficiency (both reading and speaking) and first-hand country familiarity of DDI area and functional analysts. The report does not reflect total language capability or the full extent of foreign travel of all analysts. Rather, it is restricted to these two factors only as they relate to the analysts' current assignments.

b. The definition for reading proficiency is the ability to read and analyze publications, or, if relevant, technical journals in the language. The definition for speaking proficiency is the ability to converse freely in the area or country using only the local language.

2. Language Proficiency

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d. Of the functional analysts claiming reading ability in their assigned areas, the languages in which they are proficient are as follows, in percent:

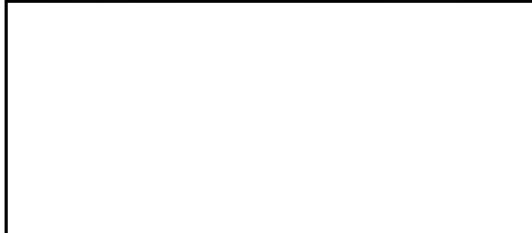
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OWI, OSR, OIA and OSI do not have area analysts.

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f. Many functional and area analysts have visited the country related to their assignments for less than two weeks. The in-country time is too short, however, to have relevance to this study, as might be a two-week visit.

4. Observations and Conclusions

a. The accumulated data suggest a need for more training in reading relevant foreign languages, especially for analysts engaged in functional activities. This view is supported in a task force study of "Critical Training Needs" prepared for the EAG early this year. In that study, only 12% of the DDI respondents (mostly Office Directors) found OTR's language training as generally meeting requirements. The primary complaint is that classes emphasize speaking and are tailored to DDO needs. This complaint suggests that DDI Office Directors desire increased training in reading for their analysts if the opportunity were available.

b. The Directorate has a limited capability in Arabic and the African languages that may need correcting. It can be argued -- and it has -- that English is prevalent in most of the countries in this area, followed by French, which diminishes the need for language capability. Yet, it would seem beneficial for the analyst to be able to read local, native language newspapers, if there are any of importance.

c. It should be noted, however, that the large and responsive translation service available to Directorate analysts is actively utilized to compensate for language deficiency. The degree of compensation might be a good topic of discussion with the Office Directors.

d. Whatever policy may be developed on upgrading the language capability of analysts, especially area analysts, one should keep the incentive factor in mind. Past policy in some of the

DDI offices of periodically moving analysts from one area to another (e.g., OCI) has tended to dampen individual efforts to upgrade language skills. An analyst's language of concern all too often had no application in the new assignment. Consequently, many analysts have not been encouraged to pursue a solid foundation in the language of interest.

e. No doubt there is room for considerable debate on the value of country visits for many of the Directorate's functional analysts (e.g., Soviet S&T, Soviet missiles, or overhead imagery). Even so, the small percentage of functional analysts from OSI (9%), OSR (7%), OWI (2%), and OIA (0%) who have visited their areas is significantly lower than for those in OER (22%) and ORPA (42%). It would seem that analysts from OWI, for example, would be able to generate improved collection requirements if they had increased first-hand exposure to certain areas and the human environment, as well as direct dialogue with collectors. The cultural insight that also would be gained would give the functional analyst a greater understanding of the country, and depending on the analyst's assignment, may improve sensitivity to analytic factors that could otherwise be overlooked in producing an intelligence product.